

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 6864

EO 11652: XGDS-4  
TAGS: PINS, SHUM, IR  
SUBJ: VIEWS OF AN EX-POLITICAL PRISONER

SUMMARY: CHARGE AND POLOFF STEMPERL RECENTLY MET WITH AN IRANIAN EDUCATED

IN THE U.S. WHO HAD BEEN IN PRISON FOR ABOUT A YEAR PRIOR TO  
HIS AMNESTY EARLIER THIS YEAR. HE SHARED WITH US SOME FRANK  
OBSERVATIONS ON HIS OWN SITUATION AND THE LOT OF POLITICAL  
PRISONERS IN IRAN. END SUMMARY.

1. POST-RELEASE SITUATION: AT THE PRESENT TIME, THERE IS NO  
STIGMA ATTACHED TO HIS PRISON TERM AND PEOPLE HAVE NOT BEEN  
AFRAID TO HELP HIM. FOR EXAMPLE, HE HAD BEEN REHIRED BY HIS  
OLD ENGINEERING FIRM AT A 40,000 RIAL-A-MONTH (ABOUT DOL\$567)  
RAISE. MOREOVER, HE HAD FOUND AN APARTMENT WHICH HAD BEEN  
OFFERED TO HIM AT A SUBSTANTIAL RENT REDUCTION BECAUSE OF HIS  
"SUBZERO" ECONOMIC STATUS AT THE TIME OF THIS RELEASE. HE AND  
HIS WIFE INTEND TO STAY IN IRAN FOR A YEAR OR SO, THEN  
LEAVE FOR A BRIEF TIME OR PERHAPS PERMANENTLY. HE HAS NOT  
BEEN HARASSED OR, TO THE BEST OF HIS KNOWLEDGE, FOLLOWED  
SINCE HIS RELEASE AND STATED HE WAS CONCENTRATING ON  
WORK AND IGNORING POLITICS NOW.

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2. EFFECT OF AMNESTY: THE TERMS OF THE AMNESTY HE AND  
OTHERS RECEIVED REMOVE THE CRIME FROM THE INDIVIDUAL'S  
RECORD.. HE COULD WORK FOR THE GOVERNMENT. HE IS FREE TO  
APPLY FOR (AND PRESUMABLY RECEIVE) A PASSPORT FOR FOREIGN  
TRAVEL, BUT WAS URGED BY FRIENDS TO WAIT A COUPLE OF  
MONTHS BEFORE DOING SO IN ORDER THAT THE IRANIAN BUREAU-

CRACY COULD CLEAR ITS RECORDS. HE "DIDN'T WANT TO SEE ANY BLUE UNIFORMS OF ANY KIND" ANYWAY FOR AWHILE.

3. CIRCUMSTANCES OF ARREST AND INTERNMENT: HE SAID HE HAD BEEN PICKED UP BY SAVAK FOR HIS "ATTENDANCE AT A FEW STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS" DURING HIS STUDENT DAYS IN CHICAGO. (NOTE: HIS CASE IS SOMEWHAT MORE COMPLEX THAN HE PRESENTED HERE, AND HIS PRESENTATION TO US MINIMIZED CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH HE MAY NOT HAVE WANTED TO DISCUSS WITH HIS WIFE PRESENT. HE MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN UNAWARE THAT WE ALREADY KNEW SIGNIFICANT DETAILS OF HIS CASE.) HE WAS TRIED IN EARLY 1977 IN MILITARY COURT AND SENTENCED. HE WAS HELD VIRTUALLY INCOMMUNICADO FOR THE FIRST TWO-THREE MONTHS AFTER HE WAS PICKED UP, THEN AFTER TRIAL SENT TO EVIN PRISON AND LATER TRANSFERRED TO QASR PRISON AFTER PRISON VISITS BY OUTSIDERS BEGAN. MOST OF THE PRISONER IN THIS SECTION OF THE PRISON WERE YOUNG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS.

4. PRISON CONDITIONS WERE NOT BAD, BUT BECAME MUCH BETTER AFTER THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS (ICRC) BEGAN ITS VISITS IN OCTOBER OF 1977. AFTER ICRC VISITS STARTED, POLITICAL PRISONERS WERE ALLOWED AS MANY BOOKS AS THEY WANTED, UNCENSORED. FOOD WAS ADEQUATE, AND HE WAS HOUSED IN A SECTION OF THE PRISON USED FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS. THIS SECTION WAS SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER KEPT AND ACCOMMODA-  
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TIONS WERE BETTER THAN THOSE OF THE REGULAR PRISON-CENTRAL HEATING, AIR CONDITIONING AND BETTER LIGHTING. PARENTHETICALLY, HE NOTED THAT ONE IRONIC RESULT OF THE SHIFT OF DISSIDENT TRIALS FROM MILITARY TO CIVILIAN COURTS HAS BEEN THAT THOSE CONVICTED MUST SERVE THEIR TERMS IN THE REGULAR PRISONS. UNLESS THE SENTENCE IS SEVERE, HOWEVER, THERE IS PROVISION IN LAW FOR THOSE SO SENTENCED TO BUY THEIR WAY OUT OF THEIR SENTENCES AT THE RATE OF 50P RIALS PER DAY, WHICH MITIGATES THE FACT THAT REGULAR PRISON CONDITIONS ARE A CUT BELOW THOSE OF "POLITICALS". IT SEEMED TO HIM THAT POLITICAL CONDITIONS IN THE COUNTRY WERE MORE FREE AND RELAXED NOW, AND THIS, PLUS U.S. INTEREST IN HUMAN RIGHTS, WERE THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS IN HIS BEING AMNESTIED.  
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